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21. RANGE EXTENSION OF *OSTEOBRAMA COTIO PENINSULARIS* SILAS TO KERALA

The genus *Osteobrama* is found in the Oriental region and is restricted to Pakistan, India, Bangladesh, Myanmar and China (Talwar and Jhingran, 1991). This genus is characterised by having a dorsal fin inserted slightly behind pelvic fins with 11 or 12 rays (8 or 9 branched), a strong serrated spine and a long anal fin with 14-36 rays (11-13 branched). The present report of *Osteobrama cotio peninsularis* is based on two specimens collected from Periyar river, Central Kerala.

Osteobrama cotio peninsularis Silas

Distinguishing characters: D iii-iv 8-9; A iii 28-31; PI 12-14; V i 9.

Body trapezoid and considerably compressed, its depth 2.2 to 2.9 times in standard length; abdominal edge trenchant from base of pelvic fins to anal fin, but rounded in front of pelvic fins. Mouth small; barbels absent. Dorsal spine weak and serrated. Scales small; lateral

line with 55 to 60 scales; scale-rows $7\frac{1}{2}$ to $9\frac{1}{2}$ between lateral line and base of pelvic fins; predorsal scales 21-24.

Osteobrama cotio peninsularis can be easily identified from its closely related subspecies by the presence of fewer branched rays in the anal fin, less than $10\frac{1}{2}$ scale-rows between lateral line and pelvic fin, greater number of lateral line scales and lesser number of pre-dorsal scales. It can be distinguished from *O. cotio cotio* in the lesser number of branched rays in the anal fin, less than $10\frac{1}{2}$ scale-rows between lateral line and pelvic fin; and it can also be distinguished from *O. cotio cunma* by the presence of greater number of lateral line scales and fewer pre-dorsal scales.

Geographic distribution: Peninsular India: Maharashtra, Orissa, Andhra Pradesh and Kerala.

Remarks: The genus *Osteobrama* is represented by seven species in India, of which *O. bakeri* is endemic to Kerala. *O. bakeri* is the

only species reported so far from Kerala under this genus. Menon (1997) considers *O. bakeri* as rare in Kerala. Except *O. cotio peninsularis* the two other subspecies of *O. cotio* are commonly distributed in North India, while the former is only distributed in the rivers of peninsular India: Maharashtra, Orissa, Andhra Pradesh (Talwar and Jhingran, 1991). Type locality of *O. cotio peninsularis* is Pune. There was no authentic record on the occurrence of this species from the freshwaters of Kerala. While conducting a survey in Periyar river in central Kerala, we collected the species from Aluva region. The species is very rare in the collections, as only two specimens were obtained along with some other *Puntius* spp. The present

report thus extends its distribution to the rivers of Kerala.

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22. *MYSTUS BLEEKERI* (DAY) — AN ADDITION TO THE FISH FAUNA OF KERALA

Bleeker (1846) originally described *Bagrus keletius* (*Mystus bleekeri*) from Bengal. In 1877 Day modified the taxon as *Macrones bleekeri* (Talwar & Jhingran, 1991). It is characterised by a depressed head and an elongate, compressed body. Barbels four pairs, the maxillary barbels extend posteriorly to the anal fin. A large adipose fin is present. Body colour in life is brownish above and lighter below. Two longitudinal bands present above and below the lateral line. There is also a dark shoulder spot on either side below the lateral line.

Mystus bleekeri is generally confined to northern India and, according to Hora (1940), the southernmost limit is the Mahanadi headwaters. It inhabits lakes, tanks and rivers. There has been no report of this species from Kerala. While conducting a survey on the distribution of freshwater fishes in Neyyar River,

we collected two specimens of *Mystus bleekeri* (of 5.4 and 6.0 cm total length) from Ottasekaramangalam thodu in Thiruvananthapuram dist. The collection site has a mixed substrate of detritus, mud, sand, cobble and bedrock, sand being the most dominant.

The diagnostic characters are the same as those given in the original description, except for some minor differences.

D. 1/7-8, P. 1/9-10, A. 9-10, C. 17

The present record extends the range of distribution of the species to Kerala.

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